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PLANS FOR AN

EXTENSION SERVICE COTTON PRODUCTION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM STUDY

This study is to be made by the Federal Extension Service, Agricultural Programs and Extension Research and Training Divisions, cooperating with certain of the major cotton producing Southern States. The objectives of the study are as follows:

To evaluate the "package" or "7-Step" approach in teaching improved cotton production methods on the farms of certain farmers in selected States and counties that cooperated with county agents in 1955 by:

- a. Determining the degree to which these farmers have followed recommended practices and combinations of practices on all phases of cotton production in 1955.
- b. Relating the degree to which recommended practices were followed by these farmers in 1955 on all phases with rates of production.
- c. Determining the attitudes of these farmers, cotton specialists, district agents, county agents and experiment station personnel in these States and counties toward the "package" idea in improving cotton production methods.

Where will it be done?

In October Mr. James E. Crosby, Division of Agricultural Programs, wrote a letter to Directors of Extension in certain major Southern cotton States to canvass their interest in cooperating on a study of the cotton improvement program. All of the States contacted indicated their interest in participating in such a study. The following will participate:

Alabama	Mississippi	Tennessee
Arkansas	North Carolina	Texas
Georgia	Oklahoma	
Louisiana	South Carolina	

How will it be done?

A minimum of 400 cotton farmers that have cooperated in 1955 with the county agents in the 10 participating States to improve their cotton production methods will be interviewed. Each State is responsible for obtaining from the participating counties a list of names of cooperating farmers from which a list of names of farmers to be interviewed will be drawn. The farmers will be interviewed by the person selected by the State. A questionnaire will be prepared for that purpose by the Division of Extension Research and Training. Completed questionnaires are to be mailed to J. Neil Raudabaugh in Washington for tabulation. State tabulations and summaries will be sent to the States as soon as they are completed for use in program adjustment and preparation of a State report. A report of the whole study will be prepared by the Federal Extension Service.



Who will do the study?

This is a cooperative endeavor between the participating States and the Federal Extension Service. Personnel of the Federal Extension Service are responsible for developing plans, procedures, and materials. The Division of Extension Research and Training will have main responsibility for preparing the questionnaires, contacting the States to discuss detailed study plans, and tabulating the completed questionnaires when they are received from the States. The report will be a joint effort of staff members from the two divisions in the Federal Extension Service.

State Extension Services will be responsible for obtaining the lists of names of farmers, providing a person to do the interviewing and sending the completed questionnaires to Washington for tabulation. Upon receipt of the data compiled from the questionnaires, State cotton specialists and others concerned may wish to prepare a State report as one way of using the findings.

When will it be done?

Timing is important because it is desirable to interview the farmers soon after the 1955 cotton crop is harvested and because the facilities of the Statistical Unit must be used when they are available beginning in February. Three deadlines or dates are to be observed:

1. The person to do the interviews should be selected in time to attend the orientation and training meeting in Memphis during the week of the Cotton Council Meeting.
2. The orientation and training meeting in Memphis December 14, at 7:30 p.m. in room 209, Peabody Hotel, for persons who are to take interviews, State cotton specialists, and others who will participate in the study.
3. Interviewing is to be completed in all participating States by February first if possible. Interviewing may be started any time after the Memphis meeting.

When will it be reported?

If the field work goes according to schedule, tabulation of the schedules should be completed soon after March first. State tabulations will be completed and sent to the States in the order the interviewing job is finished, and the last completed schedule from the States is received in Washington. The summary report should be written and ready for publication by late summer 1956.

How can the findings be used?

We think that the findings can be used in the participating States to:

1. Discover the strong and weak features of the program as it is now carried out, beltwide, or State by State.
2. Provide the basis for improving both program organization and the methods for carrying it out.

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3. Reveal the single practices and combinations of practices that are most critical in the success of cotton production.
4. Provide a basis for analyzing the procedures to evaluate and improve the cotton improvement program.
5. Serve as the basis for promoting the spread of the "package" of practices to other cotton farms.
6. Give a basis for estimating the monetary value of the benefits of the program beltwide or State by State.
7. Indicate the potential values of similar "package" of practices for other crops and major enterprises.
8. Serve as the basis of administrative decision about allocation of personnel and funds to extension cotton production programs.







